Written by **Raven Clabough** on April 9, 2020

Alaska Joins Growing List of States to Ban Elective Abortions During COVID-19 Outbreak

Alaska is the latest state to include abortions in its ban of non-essential medical procedures in an effort to conserve resources to help fight the coronavirus. Several other states have been leading this charge, and are now engaged in legal battles as abortion providers are claiming it is "essential" to terminate the unborn, even during a national crisis.

Alaska Governor Mike Dunleavy has asked healthcare professionals to postpone all procedures that are not deemed medically necessary as the state battles COVID-19, and has labeled most abortions "non-essential," unless the continuation of the pregnancy would endanger the physical health of the mother, a rare but oft-referenced scenario cited by pro-abortion advocates.

Alaska's Department of Health and Social Services Commission Adam Crum explained the goal of postponing elective procedures is to "save personal protective equipment (PPE) for staff and patients at hospitals."

Several other states have recently issued similar orders, citing the need to conserve vital medical supplies and resources to fight the pandemic. Arkansas Governor Asa Hutchinson announced through the state health department last week that all healthcare facilities would be postponing non-essential surgeries and procedures. Indiana Governor Eric Holcomb and West Virginia Governor Jim Justice of West Virginia issued similar orders. In Iowa, the temporary ban on elective medical procedures includes abortions, but does not apply to women who are approaching the state's deadline after which pregnancies can no longer be terminated.

Governors across the country have suspended elective abortions in response to the coronavirus crisis, prompting abortion providers to take immediate legal action. Federal judges have blocked the orders in Ohio, Alabama, and Texas, but the Fifth Circuit Court of appeals issued a stay on the ruling in Texas, thereby allowing the abortion ban to remain. Another appeals court affirmed the lower court's ruling blocking Ohio's order, CNN reports.

Mississippi's ban on abortions remains in effect, while a federal judge in Oklahoma struck down part of the state's ban on elective abortions this week.

Pro-abortion advocates have been pushing the narrative that abortions are essential and access should not be compromised, despite the global public health crisis. A March 18 statement from the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists in collaboration with American Association of Gynecologic Laparoscopists, the American Gynecological & Obstetrical Society, the American Society for

Reproductive Medicine, the Society for Academic Specialists in General Obstetrics and Gynecology, the Society of Family Planning, and the Society for Maternal-Fetal Medicine claimed abortion is an urgent healthcare service upon which the pandemic should not infringe.

“Abortion is an essential component of comprehensive health care,” the pro-abortion groups said. “It is also a time-sensitive service for which a delay of several weeks, or in some cases days, may increase the risks or potentially make it completely inaccessible. The consequences of being unable to obtain an abortion profoundly impact a person’s life, health, and well-being.”

But as reported by Life News, medical professionals across the country note elective abortions are simply not “essential healthcare,” and allowing them to continue while states across the country battle COVID-19 is irresponsible. More than 30,000 physicians with the American Association of Pro-Life Obstetricians and Gynecologists (AAPLOG), the American College of Pediatricians, Christian Medical & Dental Associations, the Catholic Medical Association, and the Association of American Physicians & Surgeons issued a statement denouncing the ACOG statement.

“If elective abortion were an ‘essential component’ of women’s health care, it would be a part of every obstetric and gynecologic practice,” the pro-life medical groups point out.

“Continuing to perform elective abortions during a pandemic is medically irresponsible,” they wrote. “Elective abortion is neither ‘essential’ nor ‘urgent,’ but it does consume critical resources such as masks, gloves, and other personal protective equipment, and unnecessarily exposes patients and physicians to pathogens.”

“Elective abortion, both surgical and drug induced, also generates more patients to be seen in already overburdened emergency rooms,” they continued.

Despite assertions by pro-abortion advocates that abortions require minimal PPE and are generally safe, the physicians observe that women who experience complications after an abortion are instructed to visit the emergency room. Roughly five percent of women who receive chemical abortions require an emergency-room visit for hemorrhage.

“Surgical abortions can also result in hemorrhage,” the pro-life doctors warned. “Emergency room personnel — who are already struggling to meet the demands of the COVID-19 pandemic — will be further strained to provide care to these women.”

The groups called for a suspension of all elective abortions.

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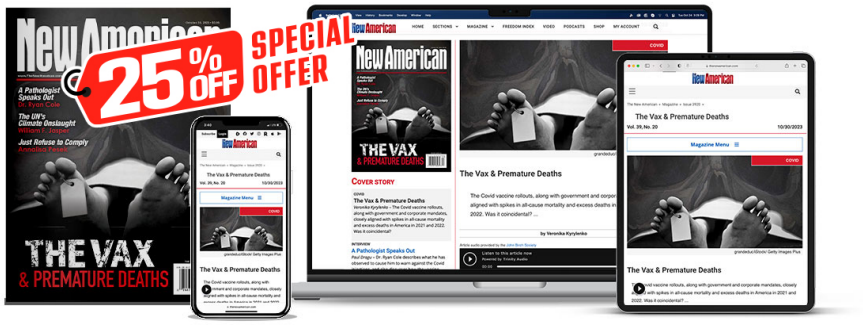

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